

National Toxicology Program Interagency Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Methods/Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (NICEATM/ICCVAM).—The Committee commends the NICEATM/ICCVAM for its role in the assessment of new, revised and alternative scientifically validated methods for the Federal Government. The Committee also commends the National Toxicology Program [NTP] for finalizing its "Roadmap to Achieve the NTP Vision."

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The Committee encourages the NICEATM/ICCVAM, in partnership with the relevant Federal agencies to build on the NTP Roadmap to create a 5-year plan to research, develop, translate and validate new and revised non-animal and other alternative assays for integration of relevant and reliable methods into the Federal agency testing programs. The Committee encourages the Federal agency program offices to identify areas of high priority for new and revised non-animal and alternative assays for the replacement, reduction and refinement of animal tests. The Committee further encourages relevant agencies to include the public when developing this plan. The Committee further requests a status report during the fiscal year 2008 budget hearings.

Parkinson's Disease.—The Committee commends the NIEHS on the work of its Collaborative Centers for Parkinson's Disease Environmental Research (CCPDER) Consortium Program to foster multidisciplinary research approaches to elucidate gene-environment interactions in PD. The Committee urges the NIEHS to work in conjunction with other NIH Institutes and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as necessary, to conduct an investigation and prepare and submit a report to the Committee on the incidence of Parkinson's disease, including age, occupation, and geographic population clusters, and related environmental factors relating to the disease. The report shall be submitted by June 30, 2007.

Strategic Plan.—The Committee commends NIEHS for preparing a new Strategic Plan to speed its progress in understanding how the environment influences the development and progression of disease. The Committee notes especially the goals of building integrated environmental health research programs to address problems in human biology and human disease and of fostering the development of partnerships between NIH, other research agencies, academia, industry, and community organizations to improve human health.

Volcanic Emissions.—The Committee continues to have concerns about the public health impacts of volcanic emissions in Hawaii. Such emissions contribute to the exacerbation of a myriad of pre-existing health conditions in many island residents, especially children. The acute and long-term impact that these emissions have on both the healthy and pre-disposed residents warrants further study. The Committee strongly advises the NIH to embrace a multi-disciplinary approach in studying the short- and long-term health effects of volcanic emissions, and to consider the establishment of a center dedicated to such research.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

Appropriations, 2006	\$1,045,912,000
Budget estimate, 2007	1,039,828,000
House allowance	1,039,828,000
Committee recommendation	1,048,912,000

The Committee recommendation includes \$1,048,912,000 for the National Institute on Aging [NIA]. The budget request was \$1,039,828,000 and the fiscal year 2006 appropriation was \$1,045,912,000. The comparable amounts for the budget estimate include funds to be transferred from the Office of AIDS Research.

work and funding for SMA research. Specifically, the Committee encourages NICHD to coordinate funding with NINDS to ensure increased participation of investigators in SMA and developmental neurobiology relevant to SMA. Further, the Committee encourages NICHD to take the lead on developing a cross-institute working group comprised of NICHD, NINDS and NIGMS to study broader questions of care and the role of exercise and nutrition on SMA and other neuromuscular disease.

Stillbirth.—The Committee applauds NICHD's efforts in addressing stillbirth, a major public health issue. The Committee is aware that NICHD cooperative network has initiated a pilot study with the overall study using a standard protocol planned to start this year, and encourages NICHD to continue to support this effort.

NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE

The Committee recommends \$661,358,000 for the National Eye Institute (NEI), which is \$5,398,000 below the fiscal year 2006 appropriation and the same as the budget request.

Mission.—NEI conducts and supports basic and clinical research, research training, and other programs with respect to blinding eye diseases, visual disorders, mechanisms of visual function, preservation of sight, and the special health problems and needs of individuals who are visually-impaired or blind. In addition, NEI is responsible for the dissemination of information, specifically public and professional education programs aimed at the prevention of blindness.

Diabetic eye disease.—The Committee applauds NEI for the collaborative efforts of the Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Network to test innovative treatment for diabetic eye disease. The Institute is encouraged to expand and extend the network by increasing the number of clinical trials with new drugs and therapeutics that can reverse or prevent diabetic retinopathy.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

The Committee recommends \$637,323,000 for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), which is \$3,809,000 below the fiscal year 2006 appropriation and the same as the budget request.

Mission.—The mission of NIEHS is to prevent disease and improve human health by using environmental sciences to understand human biology and disease. This mission is achieved through conducting and supporting disease-oriented biomedical research (basic, integrative, clinical, and epidemiologic), enhancing research capacity in environmental health sciences, prevention and intervention strategies, and communication with researchers, public health and health care providers, and the public.

Asthma.—Given the link between environmental factors and the onset of asthma, COPD, and pulmonary fibrosis, the Committee encourages NIEHS to further develop research initiatives to understand the environmental and genetic risk factors for predisposing some individuals to and in controlling the severity of these lung diseases.

Autism spectrum disorders.—The Committee is aware of the important research into the genetic and environmental basis of au-

tism spectrum disorders. Accordingly, the Committee encourages the Institute to expand its support and funding for gene-environment interaction research in autism, and encourages the institute to expand its work with and support for similar public-private partnerships.

Mercury.—In order to properly research gaps in the area of mercury exposure and brain chemistry, and given recent hearings on mercury exposure and relationships between autism and Alzheimer's disease and mercury exposure, NIEHS is encouraged to pursue studies of how inorganic mercury and organic mercury compounds (including ethyl, methyl, and other forms of mercury from all sources) are processed in the bodies of children and adults. NIEHS is also encouraged to support studies of the toxic effects of inorganic mercury and organic mercury compounds on the nervous systems of young children, adults, and the elderly and methods of properly removing mercury and mercury-containing compounds from the brains of affected humans.

National Toxicology Program Interagency Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Methods/Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (NICEATM/ICCVAM).—The Committee commends the NICEATM/ICCVAM for its leadership role in the assessment of new, revised and alternative scientifically validated methods for the federal government. The Committee also commends the National Toxicology Program (NTP) for finalizing its "Roadmap to Achieve the NTP Vision, A Toxicology Program for the 21st Century", which commits to "develop and validate improved testing methods and, where feasible, ensure that they reduce, refine or replace the use of animals" as one of its top four goals.

The Committee requests that the NICEATM/ICCVAM, in partnership with the relevant federal agency program offices and the NTP, build on the NTP Roadmap to create a five-year plan to research, develop, translate and validate new and revised non-animal and other alternative assays for integration of relevant and reliable methods into the federal agency testing programs. In this five-year plan the Committee expects that federal agency program offices will identify areas of high priority for new and revised non-animal and alternative assays or batteries of those assays to create a path forward for the replacement, reduction and refinement of animal tests, when this is scientifically valid and appropriate. The Committee requests the plan by November 15, 2007. Furthermore, the Committee expects that the cost of assembling this plan will not reduce the NICEATM/ICCVAM funding base.

Parkinson's disease (PD).—The Committee commends the NIEHS on the work of its Collaborative Centers for Parkinson's Disease Environmental Research (CCPDER) Consortium Program to foster multidisciplinary research approaches to discover gene-environment interactions in PD. The Committee encourages NIEHS to work in conjunction with other NIH institutes and CDC, as necessary, to investigate and submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, on the incidence of Parkinson's disease, including age, occupation, and geographic population clusters, and related environmental factors relating to the disease. The Committee requests the report by June 30, 2007.